

2 September 1965

MEMORANDUM

SUBJECT: Cuban Subversion in Latin America

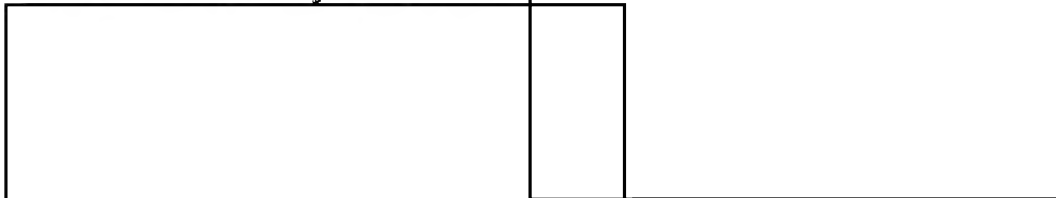
1. The Castro government remains convinced that a Cuban-style revolution is inevitable in Latin America and the "export of revolution" continues to be a major tenet of its foreign policy. Cuba is willing and able to provide training, money, and propaganda support to subversive groups in Latin America through its espionage and subversion organization, the General Directorate of Intelligence (DGI). It now concentrates on those countries--especially Venezuela, Guatemala, Colombia and Peru--where active subversive movements already exist in the field, but it can be expected to capitalize on "targets of opportunity" elsewhere in the hemisphere. The recent events in the Dominican Republic were read by Havana as both a lesson and a warning--a lesson on the importance of having a trained cadre of professional revolutionaries in place, ready to take advantage of a chaotic political situation, and a warning that the US is determined to prevent "another Cuba" in this hemisphere.

2. Although Castro never has wavered in his belief that revolution will sweep Latin America, his appraisal of the practical realities in various countries has undergone a change. In the last two years, Castro's policies have suffered reverses in Venezuela, British Guiana, Chile, and Brazil, as well as in the failure of any of the continents' militant subversive groups to overturn Latin American governments. These have served to convince Castro that his "inevitable" revolution is not imminent.

3. Cuba appears to have altered its indiscriminate revolutionary ties in Latin America. An indication of this is seen in the November 1964 conference in Havana of representatives of the Latin American Communist Parties. Cuba and the other Communist Parties agreed to aid only those groups endorsed by the regular Communist Parties--with the proviso that such groups adopt a more militant approach to the problem of revolution in their respective countries. It is too early to tell whether this agreement is being carried out. In one country--Guatemala--there are some indications that the official Communist Party is taking a more militant line, probably in the hope that increased Cuban support will follow. In Haiti, Cuba is trying to unify the two Communist Parties and rally public support for a program of violent action against Duvalier. Cuba has also tried to enlist international propaganda support for the "constitutionalist" faction in the Dominican Republic.

4. The main focus of Cuban interest, however, lies in those countries where Havana feels a genuine revolutionary potential exists. As specified in the communiqué of the Havana conference and consistently reiterated by Cuban leaders, the three most immediate targets are Venezuela, Guatemala, and Colombia. Haiti, Honduras and Paraguay were also mentioned as was Panama. In his 26 July speech, Fidel Castro added Peru to the "official" list of countries where a viable and exploitable revolutionary situation exists.

5. A large number of Venezuelans, Guatemalans, and Colombians participate in Cuba's continuing program of providing Latin American subversives with ideological orientation and training in the specifics of revolutionary warfare.



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7. In its propaganda, Cuba seems to have turned from its earlier, blatant calls to revolution, and now spends more time in laying the groundwork for revolutionary activity. This includes ostensibly objective reporting of economic and political conditions in Latin America, along with greatly exaggerated reports of the successes of militant subversive groups and calls for unity among revolutionary groups in selected countries. Havana radio broadcasts 143 hours a week to Latin America in Spanish, French, Creole (Haiti), Aymara and Quechua (Andean countries) and Guarani (Paraguay). Emphasis is on broadcasts to the "top three" --Venezuela, Guatemala, and Colombia--and there is even a special weekly program, "Venezuelan Panorama," although a portion of the Cuban effort is devoted to almost every country in the hemisphere.

8. Recent broadcasts to Haiti provide a case in point. Rene Depestre, a Haitian Communist long resident in Cuba, broadcasts vitriolic commentary on the economic and political deterioration of Haiti and the need for unity among the revolutionary forces. Depressed by the lack of concrete action by Haiti's two Communist Parties, Depestre stated, "It is of the utmost necessity that all honest Haitians gather under the banner of the Unified Democratic Front...to make Duvalier pay for his treason and all of his crimes." On the practical side of revolution, Havana radio has also been serializing "beautiful and inspiring" sections from Che Guevara's manual on guerrilla warfare and translated some speeches that were given in Cuba by the representative of the Venezuelan Armed Forces of National Liberation (FALN).

9. Cuba's role in the current Dominican situation points up several aspects of its subversive activities. Cuba provided training to more than 50 of the rebels in Santo Domingo. The majority of these were members of the pro-Castro 14th of June Group (APCJ). In December 1963, Cuba was involved in an abortive attempt to land weapons in the Dominican Republic for the violence-oriented Dominican Popular Movement (MPD).

10. When the revolt began in April, Havana apparently decided that, tactically speaking, the achievement of popular support for the Caamano forces demanded that the Communist and Cuban-trained participation in the revolt be overshadowed by its proconstitution, pro-Bosch, anti-Imbert cast. As a result, Havana at first did not refer to Communist participation, did not extend diplomatic recognition to Caamano, and used its propaganda media to concentrate on the "evils" of the Reid government, the Imbert junta, and the OAS and US presence. The APCJ, on the sixth anniversary of its founding, was lauded as a popular, not specifically a Communist, group. Havana played as a straight news item the decision of the orthodox Communist group to change its name to the Dominican Communist Party and did not take advantage of the

opportunity to show that Communists were leading supporters of the Caamano forces. The degree to which US and OAS countermeasures prompted these tactics cannot be determined. However, they do show Castro's realization that tagging a "Communist" or "pro-Castro" label on a movement is not always useful to Cuban interests.

11. In sum, while Cuba may be in the process of altering its tactics, it has changed neither its desire nor its willingness to aid subversion in Latin America. Havana will continue to offer training and propaganda support--and probably monetary assistance--to active revolutionary groups throughout the hemisphere.